critical digest

505 FIFTH AVENUE. N. Y. 17. N. Y.
MU 8-0328 T. M. KRAUS

August 4,1954 Vol VI No 47 $10 Year The Weekly New York City Theatre Newsletter

New York Theatre Diary

Almanac-re-opens Aug 23 at Imperial...Fi[illegible]son-re-opens Sept 5 at Cort... The Pony Cart-Theatre De Lys 9/14/54. I B Jos[illegible] presents new play by Roger Garis ...Midsummer Night's Dream-Met. Opera 9/21/54. Old Vic production with Moira Shearer ...All Summer Long- 9/23/54. Robert Anderson's new play with June Walker, John Kerr... The Boy Friend- 9/30/54. English musical with Julie Andrews.

Strawhat Tryouts

Waltz Down The Aisle, a new operetta with book and lyrics by Edward Eager and music from diverse Johann Strauss opus debuted at Lambertville,NJ,Music Circus. Herridge,Post, billed it as the kind of summer show mother is sure to like,but strictly for the rural playhouse. Dash, Women's Wear,admits there is a fefinite market for such "old fashioned" operettas, but they aren't for him. Both critics enjoyed comic antics of Shannon Bolin. Cast was generally applauded.

Aboard the Bandwagon,the revue compiled from 6 different Dietz and Schwartz shows, didn't impress Ward,Variety,on basis of its Bucks County,PA.Playhouse opening. Present melange becomes not a period piece but a piece out of five period, trade paper critic noted. Peter Conlow 's dancing is standout of show,while Roddy McDowall seldom rises above the level of undergraduate theatre...The Farmer's Hotel, John O Hara's adaption of his novel tried out at Fishkill,NY,Playhouse, might make it on Broadway if the author could find the formula for speeding it up a trifle without distorting the focus of the play or its mood, guesses Dash, Women's Wear...Lonely Boy, Judson Phillips' new play viewed at Sharon,Conn,Playhouse,produced and directed by the author, packs a respectable wallop until Phillips melodramatic ending, rates Geor,Variety.

London Report

The Boy Friend,due in NY this fall, is London's biggest hit, reports Watts,Post. Local audiences are virtually laughing themselves into hysterics over its picture of the follies and foibles of the musical comedies of 30 years ago. It sets out not to be a burlesque, but attempts to resemble as accurately as possible the actual tone, style and mood of the old hits. Music and lyrics by Sandy Wilson are frankly,clearly and obviously reminscent of the early work of Rodgers and Hart, DeSylvia,etc.

The Dark is Light Enough, Christopher Fry's "winter" play being produced now in London, reinforces Sheaffer,Eagle,impression that his talent is more literary than theatrical. Fry's gift of graceful gab is apparent in new play, but so is his inability to tell a story,develop a narrative drive that will hold an audience's interest. Criticcomes to reluctant conclusion that Fry's plays aren't worth seeing once, but are definitely worth seeing twice. On the second visit the shy Fry is easier to know and enjoy.

CD "Playgoer's Guide" Chart Resumes Sept 1.

Off Broadway

The Ensemble intends to proceed with its ambitious plans for a repertory company at the Bijou next season despite the resignation of Leo Kerz and Harry Horner. Joseph Kramm hopes to stick to the original dates starting with the production of Eugene O'Neill's A Moon for the Misbegotten in mid Oct.

Ted Mann, a co-producer of Circle in the Square, will be co-producer with Franchot Tone of Robert Thom's The Minotaur and Thom's Starfish. Former was originally announced for production by Circle in the Square group.

Roger Garis' The Pony Cart will be the first production of I B Joselow at Theatre De Lys opening Sept 14...Jacqueline Brookes will receive a special award " for an outstanding acting performance in Off Broadway Theatre" from Theatre World...Royal Playhouse ,83 E 4th features Early Primrose nightly except Sun & Mon at 8 30, and Lord Croft Tropic Revellers' production of Bacchanal a la Calypso every Fri and Sat at 11 30 and Sun at 8 30.

The Chair, current production of Originals Only, is atolerably tight script which receives forceful staging and some good acting, rates Geor,Variety.

Vaudeville

Eddie White heads new Palace show. Others featured on the bill includs Frank Ross and Anita La Pierre, Three Edwards Brothers, Mambo Aces, Anibal and Joe, Mac and Lorraine and 3 Guys and a Doll. "Francis Joins the Wacs" is the film.

Theatre Book Notes

Richard Maney, legit press agent who was ghost writer of "Tallulah" is now at work on his own autobiography...Dramatists Play Service has published The Winner, Kind Sir, Anniversary Waltz..."Melodrama Plots that Thrilled" by M Wilson Disher published by Macmillan Co.

Theatre Book Comment

"Introduction to the Theatre" by Frank M Whiting(Harper) cannot expect their book to be regarded seriously as a reference work due to carelessness in spelling of proper names, pans Down, Variety. Book on whole is serviceable if not inspired.

"So You Want to be A Playwright" by Betty Schoyer(Exposition) is a sprightly ,slender volume,okays Soul,Variety.

Theatre Record Comments

Three Penny Opera original cast album by MGM is a faithful and exciting disc,even though the work loses something away from the theatre,rates Bron, Variety.

Four Saints in Three Acts original 1947 album has been reissued by RCA. Variety mugg predicts album,like the stage work,will be a delight to some , a bore to others. To reviewer it sounded better on disk than on stage.

"CD" Gift Coupon

CRITICAL DIGEST-weekly digests NYC show, news,reviews,comments.Tickets,critics reports. Drama books,records,theatre on TV. SPECIAL SUMMER FEATURES. Perfect gift 52 weeks a year for "stage struck" $10 year $13.50 foreign.

Send to.....
Address.....
Subscriber's Name.....
Date Gift Card.....

Tune WNYC Allen Jay "Around NYC" Thur at 8 AM for "Off Broadway Round up". Tune WNBC Ben Grauer "Morning News" day after opening for "CD" quotes of review

Green Room Department

TICKET SOLUTION...Current battle between License Commissioner McCaffrey and the Citizens Union over whether or not there is a black market in theatre tickets is not solving the situation,points out NY Post editorial. The License Commissioner has plenty of power, but he wails that he's only allotted one inspector for the theatre district. Post suggests he get himself some more legmen and settle the thing instead of snapping at his critics.

COLUMN TIPS...Richard Aldrich planning a Gertrude Lawrence Memorial Foundation,reports Wilson...Equity cracking down on the John Barrymores,Jr. for "unprofessional emoting" on summer circuit,hears Sullivan...Major disc companies fighting over rights to Cole Porter's new musical Silk Stockings, whispers, Kilgallen.

LOST ART FORM...Playwrighting is gradually becoming a lost art form as most of the theatre writers turn to "re-wrights" complains Cahn, Host. Critic has grave doubts that creative playwrighting is within the limited purview of today's average scrivener,who is a pleasant hack who adapts instead of writes...Chapman,News,isn't against adaptions as such, but he would like it if somebody stood up and said, defiantly, that one head is better than two.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...A large amount of potential acting talent was ruined by so-called "realistic teachers",notes Burr,Playbill. Belief on the part of audiences depends not on truth,but on the appearance of truth...Palace urged to sign Willie Mays and Leo Durocher as a hit act by Morehouse, World Telegram-Sun... With the Theatre Guild back in full stride, theatre fans have a lot to look forward to next season, predicts Coleman, Mirror.

BERLIN MEDAL....Congress' voting of gold medal for Irving Berlin honors the songwriter's contribution to American morale,military and civilian, in two world wars,states NY Herald Tribune editorial. He has learned first hand of the opportunities and rewards that help make up the American dream.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...US is the country that has most appreciated and supported Sean O'Casey,the playwright told Watts,Post,when he visited his home at Devon.His gratitude to American drama critics clearly come from his own warm heartedness and not just as a result of the nice things they have said about him...If the thousands who gape and gaze at Broadway's signs ever started going to the theatre, they would find the living theatre irresistible, predicts Kermit Bloomgarden to Morehouse,WT&S...Since Thracian Horses is scheduled to open during Christmas week press agent turned producer Bernard Simon may set up a Christmas tree in the lobby,he told Coleman,Mirror.

Pros & Cons by TMK

The Off Broadway movement owes much and has learned much from "Circle in the Square." The report of Ted Mann joining forces with Franchot Tone to produce two plays may mark the end of this important group. The many current Off Broadway groups in a large way owe their audiences and their critical acceptance to the pioneering work of the group. While would be Off Broadway producers could, but probably will not learn that there is a point of diminishing returns when such groups try to go "commercial." In many ways The Girl on the Via Flaminia and the Circle group itself was killed by success. If the unit continues or not it will always remain a cornerstone of the modern Off Broadway movement.

NY theatre ticket prices for musical shows are expected to rise in the fall, reports Variety. Several managers are considering a $7.50 top, tax included, compared to the present $6.90 and $7.20. Rise in production costs and the length of time needed to repay investments, plus belief that traffic will bear the increase are the reasons given. Fanny will probably charge $7.50 for orchestra while On Your Toes at the 46th St Theatre which has divans in first 7 rows, may charge $8 for the divans and $7.50 for the rest of the orchestra.

Plays

Victor Borge's Comedy in Music reopened at the Golden...The Golden Apple closes Aug 7...Fragile Fox opens at Belasco Oct 12...Pipe Dream postponed by Rodgers and Hammerstein till fall of 1955...House of Flowers has booked Alvin...Theatre Guild season opens Sept 22 at Booth with Home is the Hero.

People

Eartha Kitt will tour in Mrs. Patterson in Detroit and Chicago prior to NY opening Dec 1...Janet Riley will star in The Tender Trap...Kaye Lyder replaces Lydia Clarke in San Francisco company of Seven Year Itch.

Summer Theatres

Aboard the Bandwagon revue moved to Ando[illegible] Playhouse...By Hex, folk musical based on Pennsylvania Dutch legend, opens at [illegible]ata, Pa Legion Park Aug 5 and plays through Aug 14...Elliott Nugent stars in Calde[illegible] Willingham's new comedy The Automobile Man at Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Pa.

Other Broadways

Dorothy McGuire will play the title role in Joan of Arc at the Stake opera this fall at San Francisco Opera Company...Teahouse of August Moon will be presented in San Francisco this fall by Leland Hayward.

Theatre Film Notes

Michael Kidd will stage the dances for Guys and Dolls film...MGM will produce film version of The Tender Trap...20th Century Fox bought Can-Can film rights for $750,000.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

Scenes from Hamlet production will be heard on NBC Radio Aug 7 from Oregon Shakespearean Festival at 6 30 EDT...Seven Year Itch will be telecast to theatres around the country in late Oct by Box Office TV as a test. Tickets for this test only will be 50¢ and 75¢...Broadway Angels will present their "Angels Auditions" TV show in Hollywood this fall.

CRITICAL DIGEST
505-5th Ave, NYC

First Class Mail